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# HBCUs: Accreditation, governance and survival challenges in an ever-increasing competition for funding and students

## **About the Author(s)**

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## **Keywords**

Governance, Administration, HBCU, Accreditation, Funding, Assessment



HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: ACCREDITATION,  
GOVERNANCE, AND SURVIVAL CHALLENGES IN AN EVER-INCREASING  
COMPETITION FOR FUNDING AND STUDENTS

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**Abstract**

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are facing challenges to their continued existence on several entities. One is fiscally, as federal funding for education has been cut and the responsibility for paying for higher education has been levied on students and parents. Another challenge is the amount of endowment dollars available to them and lastly, there are questions today as to if HBCUs are still needed in a society that has allowed African-Americans to enroll in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). Both of these challenges are contingent on the most critical issue – accreditation. The loss of accreditation of units and entire institutions has forced several HBCUs to shutter their doors. In 2016 alone, four presidents were fired due, in part, to accreditation and budgetary shortfalls. HBCUs are more than learning institutions; they are also cultural and economic incubators in their localities and regions. The closure of HBCUs creates a loss of valuable opportunities for first generation students of all races, a loss of diverse researchers, and the loss of voices in our American society.

**Introduction**

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are Black academic institutions established prior to 1964 whose principal mission was, and still is, the education of Black Americans (Roebuck & Murty, 1993, p. 3). This singular mission is sometimes at odds with HBCUs aspiring to, acquiring and maintaining individual units and overall university accreditation. In order to earn the HBCU designation, the school must be accredited or working toward accreditation in their states and can be junior colleges or have programs that work toward a bachelor's degree. "Ashmun Institute, now Lincoln University, was the first all-African American institution to remain in its original location, award baccalaureate degrees, and develop completely into a degree-granting college" (Harper, Patton & Wooden, 2009). HBCUs have been around for over 156 years and have served as a beacon in the African-American community for vocational, professional, political, and scholarly education. The roots of designation started in Congress. Justin Morrill, a congressional representative from Vermont, championed legislation in 1862 for each state to have land set aside to establish agriculture and vocational/mechanical arts. The rights for Blacks to receive these opportunities were minimal or nonexistent. Therefore, because of the "educational segregation of the Southern states, a subsequent Morrill Land Grant Act, enacted in 1890, established sixteen Black colleges to serve the same purpose for the African American population" (Justiz, Wilson, & Björk, 1994, p. 198). These new schools, and some that had previously been created, were all now known as "the 1890

colleges' to distinguish them from the 1862 land grant colleges" (Justiz, Wilson, & Björk, 1994, p. 198). Southern states simply opened the new colleges and excluded Blacks.

Some educators, such as Paul Barringer of the University of Virginia, were against educating these freed men. He said it was foolish to try to educate the former slaves while there are so many poor whites who needed training for the same jobs. In stating his case, Barringer emphasized, "We cannot equip both, and to equip the Negro to the neglect of the poor white would be a grave political error and an economic absurdity" (Brooks, 1996, p. 241). The second Morrill Act demanded the southern states to create schools to educate the freed men.

Unfortunately, as is reality now, the funding for these two groups of institutions were never equal or fair. Even with the differences in funding, "this second Morrill Act did eventually give rise to several historically Black agricultural and mechanical colleges" (Jones-Wilson, Asbury, Okazawa-Rey, Anderson, Jacobs, & Fultz, 1996, p. 18). Present-day funding is tied to institutional outcomes – from accreditation to enrollment to assessment. Accreditation is a way in which an institution is perceived as having legitimacy and transparency in the manner it is structured and operational. Most accreditation bodies of higher education institutions and programs require that programs assess their effectiveness. These accreditation processes often require self-study of individual programs as well as the institution in and of itself (Davidson-Shivers, Inpornjivit & Sellers, 2004).

Accreditation is an essential system for recognizing professional and educational programs affiliated with those institutions as having standards, a level of performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public. The study of accreditation is important because it helps the public and other stakeholders have a record of the practices and procedures that govern institutions of higher learning. Institutional agencies look at the operation of the entire college or university. The administration of institutions of higher education is a complex, challenging, and, in many instances, frustrating undertaking. The administrator must deal with many groups, including students, faculty, other administrators, federal, state, and local governing agencies, accreditation agencies, business and professional organizations, service clubs, and alumni.

This paper looks at how HBCUs operate as institutions. "Institutional Theory is an emergent set of theoretical arguments about the influence of broader sets of societal values, cultural theories, ideologies, perceptions on organizational structures, and practices." (Heck, 2004, p. 150) Institutional theory provides an alternative to technical-rational conceptions of organizations. This perspective on organizations "flows from a general institutional theory of social organization, which explains that the behavior of actors, both individual and collective, expresses externally enforced institutions rather than internally derived goals" (Crawford, Kydd, & Riches, 1997, p. 14). "Institutional theory stresses that organizational adaptation occurs due to institutional pressures for legitimacy rather than market pressures for efficiency" (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). HBCU administrators work within this framework of having their units, focused as primarily teaching institutions, while attempting to have at least some working professionals on staff. Many of these administrators have found that having media professionals, in the various fields, to join their faculty, as both adjuncts and lecturers is a way to meet current best practices at accredited institutions.

"Institutional theory is powerful in demonstrating the way in which organizations are linked to their environment; the role of agency is underestimated. It is therefore important to examine the processes by which strategic choice is exercised within organizations (Child, 1972). The administrators' challenge is to make their units as successful as they can. They define

success in different ways and institutional theory works because it does not give a template as to what makes the organization a success. "Institutional isomorphism stresses legitimacy over efficiency, thereby allowing for the persistence of inefficient, but legitimate, organizations" (Poole & Van De Ven, 2004, p. 136). HBCUs, whose primary missions were to be teaching schools, have an outstanding record of achieving and maintaining accreditation for their teaching units. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is one accreditation that HBCUs have proven to master. NCATE is a national accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education authorized by the U.S. Department of Education. NCATE determines which schools, colleges, and departments of education meet rigorous national standards in preparing teachers and other school specialists for the classroom (NCATE, 2004). Colleges and universities with Schools of Education have had to evolve with current laws and social mores. There is only one national organization whose direct actions have affected the question of who should be accredited in a particular state. This organization, which is without legal status, is a voluntary agency known as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). So, how can HBCUs, being so sound in maintaining NCATE standards, be failing in other accreditation models? HBCUs have closed their doors or been in danger of closing in the last several years. This paper examines the missions and accreditation of HBCUs, the governance challenges at these institutions, and student recruitment and retention, along with possible avenues for the future success of HBCUs.

### **HBCU Governance: Challenges and Successes**

Researchers have examined the leadership and governance of colleges and universities during the last decade. The topic of accreditation has been researched, primarily regarding online degrees, also during this period. However, the paucity of specific research on how accreditation and HBCUs intersect has been lacking in the leading educational and journalism academic journals. Educational leadership within a college or university's units makes them strong and, at times, vulnerable for failure if the leaders are not able to work within the unit's mission statement and culture, yet be innovative enough to look forward for opportunities for institutional success.

Decision-making contexts can be affected by structural, cultural, or situational distinctions that leaders of these institutions must take into account. If governance is the structure by which decisions are made determining the direction of a campus, then research on what affects decision-making is important. While the distinctiveness of HBCUs is widely recognized, defining what contextual aspects potentially affect decision-making practices has not been a focal point of scholarship (Minor, 2004). Kezar and Eckel (2004) found at the broadest level, most theories assume that governance refers to the process of policymaking and macro-level decision-making within higher education. While most of the focus has been on the presidents and chancellors at HBCUs, there are reasons to look higher than that level of governance.

The single most important decision an HBCU board makes is the selection of a top-notch chief executive. Despite this fact, there are countless examples of HBCU boards appointing presidents/chancellors who have failed miserably--and publicly--at other institutions. Moreover, there are documented instances of boards failing to honestly evaluate the president/chancellor and communicate to him/her long-standing performance issues. The failure of a board to hire the best, or fire an underperforming, chief executive is one of the worst forms of nonfeasance. For example, between September 2016 and November 2016, four HBCU presidents were relieved of their positions. The latest being Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd of Alabama State University. "She has been placed on administrative leave following the board's declaration of "failure to maintain

confidence. She battled accreditation issues, credit drops and budget short falls” (Four Black Women, 2016).

Nearly as important is the board members' fiduciary responsibility. Schools do not fail at anything overnight. Years before the accrediting bodies, lawyers, or governmental auditors and investigators show up, there are telltale signs that a diligent board should have seen. In a number of instances, HBCU boards have chosen to ignore the obvious and only respond when forced to by outside third parties; this is inexcusable malfeasance (Taylor, 2012). College and University Boards or Regents most commonly consist of members with business backgrounds. This could be the main conflict in choosing presidents and chancellors to lead these institutions. Kamery and Lawrence (2002) found that comparing the academy to corporations is not the way to choose leadership. "Corporations are managed hierarchically, whereas a college or university is not. Chief Executive Officers may make decisions with or without board approval, but administrators share decisions with faculty members" (Kamery & Lawrence, 2002). This conflict has placed successful business leaders into the academy, many of which have no acumen or understanding of the role of faculty in the academy. Many university presidents are hired for the purpose of fiscal leadership. As a result, many faculty feel as though they are employees and not as teachers and researchers. The academy works best when there is a mutual respect and shared governance. The majority of HBCUs are teaching colleges. They are not Research I designated and do not have the ability to be competitive in NIH or other grants.

HBCU governance leaders have a myriad of challenges that administrators at many PWI institutions rarely face, including the pressures of larger schools actively seeking to take students and even entire programs from their campuses. HBCUs have to fight for the funding that is being pulled more and more from the legislatures toward the state schools. Enrollment figures are important. Dollars follow the number of students in programs and schools in state funding decisions. Challenges like these need a more collaborative and institutional systematic response and answers. Conventional thinking regarding the governance at HBUCs is that there is a lack of full faculty inclusion and participation in conjunction with presidents, chancellors and boards and or regents. Thus, HBCUs face a crisis in shared institutional governance. Because of the many complex issues facing HBCUs, effective decisions required a high degree of input and thought from the participation of faculty. HBCUs may reach conclusions because decisions are made without the thorough examination of the issues (Lewis, 2011).

One way in which administrators and faculty can shine is through the process of accreditation. As important as enrollment is in funding, accreditation is more importance. HBCUs have a long history of achievement in earning and maintaining accreditation in certain disciplines; this has to be more campus-wide to allow for HBCUs to fully compete in this global environment. In his 2013 article in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, Joseph Stevenson wrote, “We must continue to think more long-term and not continue with the complacency of short-term solutions to our compelling institutional challenges. This is particularly important with regard to accreditation, where we tend to prepare only one year in advance, as opposed to embracing accreditation as a process for assessing continuous quality improvement” (Stevenson, 2013, p. 21).

However, HBUCs have seemed to master accreditation in the field of education. This may be due to their mission of educating students from a wide array of backgrounds and college preparedness. However, we also know there have been instances where individual schools have loss not only their program accreditation, but also the accreditation of their entire institution. This loss usually means the shuttering of the institution. In 2012, the Commission on Colleges of

the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) voted to take their accreditation from Saint Paul's College. The college had been educating students and providing stability in Lawrenceville, Virginia for over 124 years. The loss of accreditation is tantamount to a death sentence. Without it, colleges and universities are ineligible to receive federal aid, a major source of financial support, without which they are unable to operate. So how did this happen, and what are the implications for the nation's HBCUs? In the midst of the accreditation process that happens every 10 years, Saint Paul's College was placed on warning two years ago, an action giving it time to achieve compliance. When the commission met in June, St. Paul's had exhausted its warning status and was found deficient in five areas related to financial issues, institutional effectiveness and the terminal degrees of faculty. St. Paul's College had ample time to get its house in order - failure to do so raises questions about its governance (Schexnider, 2012, p. 40). It is noteworthy to mention being able to raise \$5 million dollars in endowment to keep its doors open and its accreditation could have saved St. Paul. There were efforts to reconcile the financial deficits, at least two presidents tried, along with plans by at least one other HBCU, St. Augustine, in North Carolina, to try to incorporate St. Paul's as part of their institution, but the financial challenges would have potentially endangered both schools.

With the United States facing debt ceiling issues and a new congress seeking to cut social spending, HBCUs are face with losing this initiative in the near future. It is clear that HBCUs have not traditionally received equal funding as other schools from either the state or federal levels. A recent discussion sponsored by The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, most HBCU presidents considered financial difficulties to be the primary barrier to student retention and graduation. One HBCU president discussed successful efforts to identify students of good academic standing, who were close to graduating, which dropped out of college for financial reasons. In some cases, offering students less than \$500 toward the cost of tuition was enough to reengage them in the academic process (Jennings, 2013).

The need for the majority of their students to have to rely on Pell Grants and having lower economic family backgrounds makes it tough for HBCUs to increase their tuitions and fees to compensate for a lack of federal and state funding. In fact, HBCUs have raised their tuitions in the last several years, but fear that if they raise them too much, African-American students may choose to attend PWIs or community colleges. HBCUs, having lower outside funding, charging less than PWIs to attend, and having students from lower economic backgrounds have a large challenge of trying to get these same students to give back to their schools. Alumni from these institutions for decades were not even request to help, "HBCUs neglected to ask their alumni for support, assuming that their alumni had little to give and doubting the return on investment of money and time spent cultivating alumni contributions" (Gasman, 2009). As some politicians look to cut education spending at all levels, the need for alumni and corporate giving to increase for HBCUs. "During difficult economic times, however, it is not easy to secure dollars from alumni not in the habit of giving" (Gasman, 2009).

The combined endowments of all HBCUs are less than 2 billion dollars, "while the endowment at Harvard University is approximately \$35 billion. Only four HBCUs, Hampton, Howard, Morehouse and Spelman, have endowments exceeding \$100 million" (Cole, 2008). These numbers have remained steady for decades and make it difficult for HBCUs to compete for not only potential students but also faculty that are the best teachers, researchers or combination of both. Other HBCUs, from 2010 through 2013, faced the same fate as Saint Paul's College. Prior to being taken off SACS probationary status, in 2013, Fisk University was among several schools at risk of closing.

SACS Commission on Colleges rejected Fisk's most recent report on its efforts to address concerns raised by the agency in December 2010 and again in June 2011. While continuing the school's accreditation, the commission gave Fisk officials 12 months to address repeated concerns over the school's financial stability, governance and financial controls. SACS also announced major actions involving other HBCUs: It reaffirmed (for 10 years) the accreditation of Southern University of New Orleans, Elizabeth City State University, Alcorn A & M University and Jackson State University in Mississippi, Claflin University in South Carolina, the Morehouse College School of Medicine in Atlanta and Texas Southern University in Houston. It removed Bennett College, the women's college in South Carolina, from probation and removed Tennessee State University from warning status. It placed four schools on "warning" status, including Fort Valley State and Savannah State universities in Georgia, Edward Waters College in Florida and Jarvis Christian College in Texas. It kept Stillman College in Alabama on "warning" status (Stuart, 2012, p. 8).

A major reason Fisk had its probation lifted may have been due to the fact Fisk enjoyed a \$30 million windfall when Tennessee courts last year freed the school to enter an art-sharing agreement with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas (The Tennessean, 2013). Other schools are also facing the challenge of regional accreditation – Norfolk State University, also in 2014, was placed on probation by SACS. “I am confident that we will work this out in the time that’s given, but it’s going to take radical changes,” Eddie N. Moore, Jr., NSU’s interim president, said of the decision by the board of trustees for SACS. Belle S. Wheeland, president of the SACS Commission on Colleges, said NSU was placed on 12-month probation.

In 2012, SACS publically sanctioned Virginia Union University for non-compliance with three core financial standards. In 2013, SACS put South Carolina State University on “warning” status due to issues with administration and governance. Questions were raised about, among other things, financial stability, control of sponsored research and external funds and management of various federal programs for which SCSU had received federal funds. Of these four SACS sanctioned schools, only Saint Paul’s College did not have NCATE accreditation. The other three have all had and maintained The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards and were in good standing with the agency as of June 2015. While SACS is charged with the entire institutional accreditation, as mentioned earlier, HBCUs have been masters at maintaining several unit-specific national accreditations. The mission of HBCUs was to teach those not accepted at other institutions.

Normal schools became colleges and universities. NCATE has continually accredited HBCUs with education units throughout these institutions’ efforts to prepare teachers for the profession. NCATE is a national accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education authorized by the U.S. Department of Education. NCATE determines which schools, colleges, and departments of education meet rigorous national standards in preparing teachers and other school specialists for the classroom (NCATE, 2004). Colleges and universities with Schools of Education have had to evolve with current laws and social mores. There is only one national organization whose direct actions have affected the question of who should be certified in a particular state.

According to thinkhbcu.org, HBCUs have historically graduated a large percentage of the nation's African American teachers and have been credit with the capacity of preparing highly effective educators (Hembree, Costa, Glaude, Akbar, & Hale, 2013). The question becomes, “How can HBCUs do so well with individual unit best practice standards, such as with NCATE,



but struggle with institutional accreditation?" HBCUs can succeed with accreditation and having strong units, such as those in education; can be wonderful guides for the entire institution. Another unit showing program-specific success in accreditation at HBCUs is journalism.

### **HBCUs – Journalism units show strength in accreditation**

#### **Unit accreditation: HBCU programs and best practices.**

To understand the importance of having people of color in what is considered the Fourth Estate in America, it is important to understand the value of the press in the formation of the United States. The press in the early American colonies spoke out about what they considered tyranny from England and was determined to let everyone know the issues of the day. Benjamin Franklin and other newspaper printers helped to create a "collective consciousness of eighteenth-century America, thereby playing a central role in establishing the legacy of social importance that the press has enjoyed to the present day" (Frasca, 2006, p. 21).

While the American colonists were advocating for freedom from English control of the press and other basic rights, these rights were for white males, specifically white male landowners. There were whole sections of the populace living in the colonies that were not given the opportunity to even learn how to read these powerful messages. The American slave was forbidden to learn to read. The overwhelming ethnicity of a slave in America was one of African descent. The process of keeping African slaves and their descendants illiterate continued throughout America's history. The common practice of legislating literacy throughout the American South was accepted and had a purpose. Those who chose to break these laws were ostracized or worse. Indeed, the idea of the masses having access to information and ideas terrified those at the top of society" (Rudin & Lbbotson, 2002, p. 18). This challenge to authority is a key to journalism. Having different voices in a society to speak for all society is a privilege and an obligation for journalists. "First Amendment rights and the democratic political environment of the United States have contributed to the uninhibited growth of the news media in public and private communication" (Noronha, 2005, p. 9). It is with this in mind that HBCUs continue to be a beacon to those that crave and depend on the African-American media voices.

Dean Walter Williams' establishment, in 1908 at the University of Missouri, the nation's first stand-alone school of journalism was sixty-six years before Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), became the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to establish a journalism program in 1974. Crawford (2012) found there are 49 HBCUs with journalism and mass communications units. These units can be delineated as concentrations, programs, divisions, departments and schools. These 49 units make it possible for African-Americans to help shape the images and messages that are generated by the media. The best way for African-Americans to be a part of the media is to produce students and graduates who are taught the theories and techniques used by the media. HBCUs are producing many students enrolled in mass communication and journalism as minor and major courses of study. HBCUs offering degrees in journalism and mass communication need to be accountable for providing the basic skills and theoretical framework to allow students the ability to compete with students from PWIs for career opportunities. Studies, such as the University of Georgia surveys, have shown over 80% of all media professionals have some link to an HBCU.

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) grants accreditation. As in most cases of accreditation of schools and programs, the aim is to ensure the curricula and outcomes of a member meets established standards. This is not to say that accreditation is the deciding factor for administrators; just that it is a choice. Accreditation creates other challenges - most noticeably, financial. The costs to apply, prepare,

and implement accreditation standards are too much for many units, HBCUs, and PWIs to afford. Therefore, HBCU JMC administrators face the challenge of using the best of the accreditation practices to ensure their students are competitive. Can the administrators hire the most qualified faculty, can they foster an atmosphere that is conducive in moving curricula forward, and will the administrator have the term and freedom to do these things? Will the cost and time needed to do the self-study and all the other steps needed to prepare for accreditation take away funding otherwise needed for salaries and operating expenses. These questions present a challenge to the way administrators have operated their institutions since their founding as HBCUs.

Institutional governance at HBCUs has seen the need for more of shared governance, focused towards the future, to be successful. Embracing accreditation reviews and submission needs to be a pillar in these endeavors. Journalism programs are embracing the standards and the best practices expected of ACEJMC members. There are 105 ACEJMC accredited schools. Of these units, there are seven HBCUs – Howard University, Hampton University, Florida A&M University, Norfolk State University, Grambling State University, Southern University, and Jackson State University. To have seven accredited units at HBCUs, out of the 105 schools, is impressive. There are over 490 institutions offering journalism and/or mass communication degrees.

HBCUs also are trying to shed the notion that "qualified" journalists of color only come from predominantly white institutions. They no longer want to be seen as providing an education that is somewhat less than what a student could get at a predominantly white school. "It is especially important for HBCUs to seek accreditation because we need to focus on quality, high standards and preparing our students for the professional world if that's what they choose," said Pearl Stewart, director of Career Development Services in the School of Journalism and Graphic Communication at Florida A&M University (Berry, 2003). Dr. Lee Becker, director of the Cox International Center at the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, has conducted an annual survey of journalism programs since 1987. Dates (2003) cited this survey, stating, "For the past five years, the University of Georgia has produced an Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates that has concluded that if it were not for journalism programs at HBCUs, there would be almost no students of color going into the nation's newsrooms. The 2014 survey found the same numerical statistics regarding both enrollment and degrees conferred to students of color at HBCUs as opposed to the numbers of students of color at all other journalism institutions.

Administrators, faculty and staff at HBCUs have continued to provide avenues of success for journalism and mass communication units at these institutions. Accreditation of these units does not ensure proper funding or favorite-status on campus, but it does allow for the recruitment and retention of students. Fiduciary response to enrollment is an expectation and accreditation is a key to favored-status. Most colleges and universities are struggling to find money to fund departments, hire the best professors and to improve and solidify their infrastructures. The challenge is massive. HBCUs historically provide education to students that are not able to pay the full cost of college. Students that traditionally attend HBCUs come from low-income families and HBCUs have missions that require the institutions to provide the ability for the students to attend. Brown & Freeman (2004) state that in short, both student opportunity and HBCU enrollments depend upon financial aid packages. This is not to imply that White students' families do not face financial hardship. In fact, President Barack Obama, in his 2012 State of the Union Address, stressed the importance of the help that all Americans are now facing.

When students do graduate, the most daunting challenge can be the cost of college. At a time when Americans owe more in tuition debt than credit card debt, this Congress needs to stop the interest rates on student loans from doubling in July. Extend the tuition tax credit we started that saves millions of middle-class families thousands of dollars, and give more young people the chance to earn their way through college by doubling the number of work-study jobs in the next five years. Of course, it is not enough for us to increase student aid. We cannot just keep subsidizing skyrocketing tuition; we will run out of money. States also need to do their part, by making higher education a higher priority in their budgets. Colleges and universities have to do their part by working to keep costs down (President Barack Obama State of the Union Address 2012). Journalism units that are not accredited are now willing to follow the standards stated in ACEJMC accreditation. These best practices will help the other 42 HBCU institutions that have not chosen to seek accreditation be able to model themselves, to the best of their abilities, with the nine standards required for accreditation.

### **Challenges and Recommendations for Journalism Accreditation**

Freedom of the press is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly by those given the opportunity to be journalists. The best way to have an informed and ethical journalist is to teach them about the best practices of the profession. These best practices could simply be considered securing and advancing all journalism that adheres to its original and fundamental principles. However, do journalists get these skills and canons by simply doing or do they need a solid academic framework of liberal arts to allow them to better see the world around them? This is the purpose of accreditation, and setting standards, by which all journalism schools can have a cornerstone by which to build a sound structure. That structure would take literally decades to construct and accept as a way to teach journalism education by the majority of institutions.

As more colleges and universities started teaching journalism, there became a sense of needing a cohesive and common course of action to educate journalism students. There needed to be some way to end or at least mitigate the tensions and strata of those that wanted the way of the academy and those that favored relying on the professional model. Could educating journalists serve two masters? Is journalism best suited as a training ground or as an academic endeavor? "If it serves as a trade school for the press, how can it obtain legitimacy as an academic discipline?" (Sloan, 1990, p. 4) Publisher Joseph Pulitzer wanted his views of journalism education to be the model schools would use.

In discussing Pulitzer, Sloan (1990) found that Pulitzer wanted the journalist to be more than a mere tradesman, and he believed journalism education could make the field a profession and give it responsibility, enlightenment, and prestige. By 1912, there were 32 institutions teaching journalism. Dean Walter Williams, again, stepped forward to help mold the future of journalism. He was interested in finding out how each of these schools was teaching journalism. What he found was that there were multiple agencies and associations being followed by these schools. He knew, now, that it was time to establish standards in teaching.

The American Association of Teachers of Journalism (AATJ) was founded at what was called the third annual American Conference of Teachers of Journalism in Chicago on November 30, 1912, under the instigation of Willard G. Bleyer of Wisconsin, who became its first president (Dickson, 2000, p. 15). What came out of this conference was an agreement to combine five associations. Later that year, the idea was adopted, which allowed journalism educators to be members of one agency, instead of the five or more other organizations. ATTJ became the Association of American Schools and Departments of Journalism (AASDJ). Through several iterations of agencies and association names, the accrediting group's influence blossomed. In the

early 1950s, George E. Simmons, then new president of the Association for Education in Journalism (AEJ), queried whether the American Council on Education for Journalism (ACEJ) accreditation process would concentrate on improving professional training only in accredited schools, or would the council oversee journalism training in all the nation's programs offering journalism instruction (Massé & Popovich, 2007).

Within every phase of the changes in names and leadership, there were now actual accrediting standards established. There were still issues, such as establishing a periodic review of the schools and a voted on manner by which to remove schools from accreditation if they failed to meet standards. Massé & Popovich (2007) posited that, Simmons' vision has happened, and 425 programs belonged in 2007 to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), including 107 accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). AEJMC has worked to improve journalism education and has provided guidance to all journalism programs through its annual meetings and regional conferences. At one point AASDJ had 17 standards there are currently nine standards.

Of the nine standards for ACEJMC accreditation, two of them, one dealing with diversity and the other regarding research and professional development have shown to be the most challenging for not only HBCUs, but also for all institutions to maintain. Most would think HBCUs would have the requisite diversity for these standards; however, diversity is more than simply having a count of African American faces on campus. HBCUs need to have a plan to create a more diverse student population and faculty representation. The research standard really is the one that challenges the actual mission of most HBCUs, due to the majority of them being teaching institutions. Current research shows how shared governance could help with this. There needs to be innovative ways in which to alleviate the need for faculty at HBCUs to teach three or even four different “in-class” courses per semester. It is prohibitive for faculty teaching that type of load to engage in research.

One way in which to help the currently accredited HBCUs and encourage additional institutions to seek accreditation would be to form collaborations with each other and the state schools in their individual states. One such resource is the Center for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), <http://www2.gse.upenn.edu/cmsi>, at the University of Pennsylvania, constructed to help with best practices and some solutions for challenges to accreditation seekers.

### **Future Research and Conclusion**

HBCU journalism units are currently competitive with their PWI peers in providing best practices and real world experiences for their students. The recruitment and retention of students of color and lower socio-economic students will continue to be the base populations for HBCUs. Accreditation allows HBCUs to show they are on the same level as other schools. Accreditation levels some of the challenges and allows teaching institutions to make up some of the ground on Research 1 institutions. Certainly, there are flaws in the accreditation process; including the individual site teams and the values they place on the institutions' self-reports and onsite interviews. There is no one-size-fits all academic standard. However, there are consistent traits inherent in all the accredited institutions – teaching, assessment diversity, research and effective shared governance.

Institutional theory tells us that institutions establish structures of order to reduce uncertainty and connect the past with the present and into the future. People form institutions but oftentimes the two act independent of each other (Scott, 1995). Over time, an institution's goals and values are not the product of a few individuals with a singular mindset from one generation. The goals and values emerge from communal knowledge constructed on core, agreeable

concepts through multiple generations (Reinardy & Crawford, 2013). A paradigm shift away from being an individual Historically Black College or University and more of an implementation of consortia and centers for the betterment of all HBCUs could assist these institutions in earning and maintaining their place in journalism education. Accreditation drives funding and larger enrollment in these programs. Accreditation provides legitimacy to a unit. HBCUs have shown they are experienced in handling the standards of NCATE, now is the time for these schools to make accreditation an institutional priority. Take the examples of successful program accreditation and incorporate them into a strategic plan of action.

Research should be done on how funding for these centers are helping HBCUs in the next several years. Is the external funding from private corporations and individuals making a difference in attracting students and faculty to HBCUs? Is the funding offsetting lost state and federal budgetary obligations? Will the new funding opportunities allow HBCUs to institute practices such as course reductions and semester fellowships for faculty, thus allowing them to conduct research? Online classes and relationships with high school journalism statewide, meeting with student organization advisors, and the national Journalism Education Association (JEA) could help recruitment and retention. Most journalism students were first introduced to journalism in high school and the person they most often listen to regarding college choice decisions is the advisor.

HBCUs are still important in educating, primarily first-generation African-Americans. As posited by Lemelle (2002), Howard professor Ralph Bunche, in the 1960s spoke frequently regarding the importance of HBCUs in the African-American community. Young Blacks were looking to the HBCU with high expectations for the education that would prepare them for what they perceived to be a new era of employment opportunities in a rapidly changing world. It must be stated that HBCUs educated not only African Americans in 2015, HBCUs are multicultural and diverse in their student population; however, HBCUs predominantly enroll African Americans. The media message strategies taught to students at HBCUs give the students a strong base in seeking careers in the profession and in theoretical frameworks. The theoretical frameworks taught at not just HBCUs, but also PWIs, such as hegemony and marginalized populations, are important in furthering a more diverse representation of scholars and practitioners because these frameworks detail how and why messages are shown in the media.

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